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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Azerbaijan

Addendum

Information provided by Azerbaijan in follow-up to the concluding observations*

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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1. **Strengthen the capacity of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs (SCFWCA) by upgrading it to fully-fledged ministry in order to improve its effective functioning as a national machinery responsible for the advancement of women and the full implementation of the Convention; establish clear terms of reference for gender focal points in government institutions; and provide them adequate human, financial and technical resource (see CEDAW/C/AZE/CO/5, para. 15 (a)).**

2. In terms of the implementation of women's rights and gender policy the current organizational form of the State Committee on Family, Women and Children Affairs is eligible for the implementation of the rights and duties envisaged in its regulation.

3. **Adopt national action plan on gender equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, recommendations in the present concluding observations (see CEDAW/C/AZE/CO/5, para. 15 (b)).**

4. The National Development Concept "Azerbaijan 2020: Look into the Future" endorsed in 2012 envisions development of the "National Action Plan on Gender Equality" for establishment of the effective implementation mechanism for the law on "Guarantees of gender equality". Guided by this provision as well as the respective recommendations of the CEDAW Committee, the SCFWCA is currently developing the National Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in close partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Azerbaijan and local team of experts. The project is currently under the improvement.

5. **To adopt without delay the national strategy on the prevention of domestic violence and the national action plan on the prevention of domestic violence, and allocate adequate resource for their implementation (see CEDAW/C/AZE/CO/5, para. 23 (a)).**

6. The State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs initiated a two-year project entitled "Combating gender-based violence in Azerbaijan" in close partnership with UNFPA and US Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2016.The main objective of the project is to support the Government of Azerbaijan with creation of effective guidance and response mechanisms to combat gender-based violence. The project is being implemented through the series of interrelated components on improvement of legal and policy framework, large scale awareness-raising campaigns, provision of trainings for relevant service providers, as well as development of integrated strategies to coordinate multi-sectorial approaches to addressing violence against women that are expected to contribute to the series of major outcomes, outputs and results. Mrs. Pramila Patten, then member of the CEDAW Committee and currently the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflicts, provided high level technical assistance to the Government of Azerbaijan for developing the policy framework on GBV prevention and response. Series of meetings were held with high level government officials, NGOs and expert community. In addition, the trainings to increase local capacities for effective development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the National Action Plan on GBV prevention and response were conducted. Both the draft National Action Plan and the guidelines for establishment of the inter-agency coordination mechanism on GBV prevention were developed through a highly participatory procedure. These important policy documents were officially shared at the high level conference on "Creating an effective response mechanism for combating domestic violence" held on 24th October, 2017. The series of major advocacy events and high level policy dialogue to get both documents endorsed is scheduled to follow.

7. At present, the National Action Plan on Prevention of Domestic Violence is at the stage of coordination with relevant agencies. The final version of the project will

be prepared and submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan, taking into account the comments and suggestions of the agencies.

8. **To put in place a system to collect comprehensive data on all forms of violence against women, disaggregated by age, urban and rural areas and relationship between the victim and the perpetrator (see CEDAW/C/AZE/CO/5, para. 23 (b)).**

9. To ensure improved institutional response capacity as well as availability of an adequate tool for internal accountability and performance monitoring as regards collection, analysis and use of data on domestic violence, the inter-agency GBV database was developed. A set of trainings on the use of electronic database related to domestic violence have been held for representatives from different state agencies and regional executive authorities, municipalities and etc. within the framework of the Project on "Combating Gender Based Violence in Azerbaijan". The representatives from all relevant agencies (the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs, the local executive powers and the referral centers with accreditation to provide support services to the victims of domestic violence) have been duly registered in the system in the capacity of the Database users. These agencies will collect relevant data and enter it to the database which includes information about the victim (including the information on sex, age and relationship with the perpetrator), perpetrator, location, interim measures (protection orders, court judgments, etc.).

10. The SCFWCA acts as the Administrator of the Database in line with the respective order of the Cabinet of Ministers. The GBV database is currently being further improved in partnership with UNFPA and other relevant stakeholders.

11. It is also worthwhile to note that the special monitoring groups on GBV and violence against children have been functioning under the auspices of the local executive powers in each region of the country since 2015 to boost coordination of GBV prevention and response efforts between and among different state institutions.

12. The Special Gender Group has also been established in partnership with the Media Trade Union to analyze the effect of the available national gender policies in Azerbaijan on the media representatives including the working conditions of female journalists. The Group is also closely engaged in awareness raising activities held through media.

13. **To establish State-funded support and referral centers for victims of violence throughout the country and strengthen cooperation with relevant non-governmental organizations in this respect (see CEDAW/C/AZE/CO/5, para. 23 (c)).**

14. As already mentioned, the Government is currently engaged in the development of the National Action Plan on GBV prevention and response as well as the guidelines for establishment of the inter-agency coordination mechanism as regards this issue. Both policy documents have major provisions on improving the delivery of support, protection and rehabilitation services through support and referral centers for victims of violence. The documents also envision further revision of the accreditation rules and procedures for the centers in a capacity to provide the adequate support services to the victims of GBV.

15. **To increase the number of State-funded shelters for women who are victims of violence, especially in the regions, and establish a round-the-clock national helpline for victims (see CEDAW/C/AZE/CO/5, para. 23 (d)).**

16. Given the limited availability of the adequate financial resources necessary for increasing the number of State-funded shelters for the women victims of violence as well as establishment of the national helpline, the Government faces major challenges in fulfilling this recommendation within the current reporting period. However, the SCFWCA continues the advocacy efforts including through the above stated policy documents to fulfill this recommendation.

17. At present, 10 non-governmental assistance centers accredited by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population are functioning for victims of domestic violence. These assistance centers are funded by the government on a basis of law on social order. The "Clean World" Public Union for Women in Baku and "TAMAS" Regional Development Public Union, operating in Ganja, also provide shelter for victims of domestic violence. In 2018, an assistance center for children affected by domestic violence has been launched in Sumgayit. This center operates with the financial support of the "Women's Initiative and Assistance to Solution of Social Problems" Public Union on the basis of the state social order.

18. **To set a time frame for the ratification of the Council of Europe on preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic (see CEDAW/C/AZE/CO/5, para. 23 (e)).**

19. The SCFWCA is in the process of discussions with the relevant Government agencies and the Parliament as regards the implementation of this recommendation.